THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) to (c) The Government have sanctioned erection of 3286 Kms. of fence along the India-Bangladesh border to prevent illegal infiltraction and other illegal cross border activities. So far, 2078 kms. of fencing has been completed. It is felt that fencing when completed all along the Indo-Bangladesh border will be an effective obstacle to illegal infiltration and smuggling across the international border. The work on the remaining portion is expected to be completed by December, 2006.

Permission to container depots for importing iron scrap

†3067. SHRI SURENDRA LATH:
SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently granted permission for more container depots to import iron-scrap;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have made all essential arrangements before allowing more import container depots for importing iron-scrap to prevent arrival of live-shells in form of scrap in the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) No Sir,

(b) The Government has granted permission for four more Container Depots for import of metal scrap vide Public Notice No. 39 dated 16th August, 2005. these include ICD Kanpur, ICD Ahmedabad, ICD Pithampur and ICD Malanpur taking the total number of Container and Depots to twenty six.

(c) and (d) All imports of metallic scrap and waste are accompanied by a Pre-Shipment Inspection Certificate (PSIC) to the effect that the consignment does not contain shells, ammunition, radio active material. In case the consignment is not accompained by a PSIC, clearance is allowed by Customs with 100% inspection in terms of Customs Circular

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

No. 56 dated 18.10.2004. The issue of further tightening the regime for screening consignments of metallic scrap is under the consideration of the Committee of Secretaries.

Negotiations with Gulf Cooperation Council

3068. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister authorized the Commerce and External Affairs Ministries to initiate negotiations with the Gulf Cooperation Council to conclude a Free Trade Agreement (FTA);

(b) whether the Prime Minister has pointed out that the Gulf region like South East and South Asia, is part of our natural economic hinterland and so we must pursue closer economic relations with all our neighbours;

(c) if so, whether both Commerce and External Affairs Minister visited these countries and had reached agreement; and

(d) if so, the details of the same and by when they are likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) The Trade and Economic Relations Committee, headed by the Prime Minister, has decided that the Department of Commerce may proceed with negotiating a Free Trade Agreement with the Gulf Cooperation Council.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Earthquake Resistant Constructions

3069. SHRI VIJAY J.DARDA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that traditional structures in many regions of India have strong earthquake resistant features as compared to post multi-storied complexes;